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ABSTRACT

Student violence reflects conflicts of interest on the matter of political choice and is symptomatic of current reevaluation of the meaning of choice. The rationale for violence varies: Marcuse suggests that government, law and order, are disguised forms of violence; Fanon regards violence as a necessary act of cleansing and self restoration; psychiatrists Laing and Cooper view society as violence but do not see violence as an end in itself. The need to transcend personal anxieties, making use of such rationale, acts along with the rationale itself to erupt both collectively and publicly. The possibility of violence appears contingent upon the strength of the assumptions that specific aims are not subject to compromise and that moderate tacticsare too slow, or upon the agents of social control responding to or initiating violence. The vast supply of literature on student unrest allows for exploration of the interplay between intra-university and national issues and the overlap between the cultural and personality elements. Books by W.S. Bakke, Edward Shils, Raymond Boudon, S.M. Lipset and others including various American surveys like the Kerner Report show where these contingencies have resulted in violence. (JH)

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Theme

POLITICS BETWEEN ECONOMY AND CULTURE
LA POLITIQUE ENTRE L'ECONOMIE ET LA CULTURE

Stein ROKKAN

Commission

THE POLITICAL ROLES OF VIOLENCE

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Topic - Sujet

SOCIAL CONTROL AND VIOLENCE - THE STUDENT CASE

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Paper presented to

Section 1.10

SOCIAL CONTROL AND VIOLENCE - THE STUDENT CASE

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The student (and other) rebellions in the last decade in advanced societies have served to raise afresh some perennial problems of political thought and political analysis. These 'rebellions', like many other less spectacular forms of political activity reflect clashes of interests (and opinions about those interests) on matters of political choice - about the manner and speed and direction in which, given scarce resources and values, political decisions are reached. What has become clearer is the instrumental role of the capacity all groups have (even when they do not exercise it to the full) to inflict loss, injury or damage upon other groups or 'target' individuals in those groups. In the defence of privileges or in demands to have privileges or benefits conferred upon them, much violence has at times been deployed - it is the ultimate weapon both of governments and oppositions. Now the conventions,

the consensual barriers which limit the use of violence have entered into a great variety of theoretical arguments - whether they are those of 'liberal' democratic thought or Marxism or the melange of ideas which, for example, Herbert Marcuse has attempted to coalesce: and much of this thinking has, over centuries, entered inextricably into the 'derivations' by which the public powers, and those who oppose the public powers, have sought to explain and defend their actions or inactions. It has been very rare indeed to sense a justification for violence <u>for its own sake</u> - at least at the level of conscious purpose. Indeed (though the long run may at times <u>seem</u> interminable) the long term use of violence (including political terror) is incompatible with any known form of modern polity.* In recent years useful distinctions have been made between 'official' or 'institutionalised' violence on the one hand and, on the other, the violence which can accompany (functionally or not) 'anti-official' movements of dissent or protest: and there has been a re-examination

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*The case of "official violence" in Nazi Germany is, of course, arguably a potential exception - but mercifully the world was spared the 'long term' implications of Hitler's proposed New Order.

of the (more obviously normative) distinctions between 'legal' and 'illegal' violence. It is possible to see merit (and realism) in this re-examination - even if few would not go as far as one of the re-examiners, R. P. Wolff, in rejecting as false "the assumption that there are or could be legitimate governments".*

Student attitudes towards violence have mirrored this re-examination - and they have been of practical as well as ideological concern. To all who are not pacifists the difficult question of when and how violence may be used in furthering political ends is bound to arise. Key groups in the 'adult world' of several countries have, in recent years, come to regard internal social problems as so intractable that they condone violent action (or the threat of it) as the only solvent to bureaucratic apathy. Violence seemed to 'pay' - and it was 'in the air'. The student militants, among others, have absorbed the message and, some would say, diffused it. Some countries indeed have a history of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary violence:

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*Journal of Philosophy LXVI, 19, Oct. 2, 1969.

their police, or special security forces, have used violence (often prematurely or unnecessarily) in dealing with unpopular minorities. Recourse to violence by student groups in Europe, America or in Japan has often been a response to precipitate or brutal police intervention: often, too, students have violently resisted the legitimate efforts of police who seek to restore order, on or off university premises, or to remove trespassers. (Attitudes towards the police have become a central theme in militant circles). There have been instances, too, of damage inflicted on the property, or offices* of teachers, or the persons (or cars) of unpopular visitors - even in Britain** where, except in the Grosvenor Square melees around the American Embassy, there has been very little 'violence in the streets'. And apart from the well-documented episodes in American

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*This was a feature of the Columbia troubles. Interesting and slightly comic was the extremist slogan at LSE in March 1969, "What are a few looted offices compared with our looted lives?"

**Still Lord Annan, Provost of University College, London, felt it necessary in February 1968 to say: "It is deplorable that students should go to demonstrations armed with knives or bottles. I think it is better in a University to pelt people with words rather than vegetables when you don't agree with them."

campuses and in France there has been especial ferocity in West Berlin and Tokyo.

Justification of this violence varies from simple assertion to quite complex argument. On the simplest level may be put the view of Hans Juergen Krahl (an executive member of the SDS) as reported in the German press in April 1968: "We do not follow Gandhi but Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao Tse Tung. We advocate revolutionary violence. When we are attacked we have the right to defend ourselves. Revolutionary violence is always in self-defence." The guerrilla heroes of the New Left have been equally forthright. In an often quoted passage Che Guevara insisted: "Hatred is an element of the struggle..... relentless hatred of the enemy that impels us over and beyond the natural limitations of man and transforms us into an effective, violent, selected and cold killing machine." Yet it seems that Che at times urged a philosophy which measured costs and benefits, fearing lest "government repression will cost the insurgents more than they can gain".*

A consistent enthusiasm for violence was hard to detect in the preliminaries of student protest in America or Britain. In the United States of America the Port Huron

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*See T.P. Thornton, 'Terror as a Weapon' in H. Eckstein, ed. Internal War (Free Press, 1964, p.87).

Statement in 1962 affirmed "..... we find violence to be abhorrent because it requires generally the transformation of the target, be it a human being or a community of people, into a depersonalized object of hate". And looking back at British experiences from the standpoint of 1969 the advocates of student power were to observe that "for the student generation of the 1960s it suddenly became clear that violence could have a liberating purpose" - and they criticize the earlier Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament for being: "inspired by the non-violent dissent of Gandhi; it thereby mistook a tactic for a principle. Such tremendously effective campaigns as that launched by the SDS against the Springer Press in Germany, were completely outside the orbit of its conceptions".*

There were, however, some more sophisticated approaches to the "tactical" problems of violence. For example Professor Marcuse developed a theme very dear to militant ideology - that government, law and order are disguised forms of violence. Commenting on the Chicago disturbances during the Democratic Party convention in August 1968, he

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*Student Power edited by A. Cockburn and R. Blackburn, Penguin, 1969, p.44.

observed: "I don't think that violence institutionalized in the apparatus of law and order has to be revealed. I think it manifests itself without any inhibition". In One Dimensional Man (p.23) he argued that "those whose life is the hell of the Affluent Society are kept in line by a brutality which revives medieval and early modern practices". Moreover the 'repressive whole' is steadily engaged in hostility towards an 'external' Enemy: "once again the insanity of this whole absolves the particular insanities and turns the crimes against humanity into a rational enterprise". (ibid. p.52). From this it is easy to pass into the claim that social institutions are, in their very essence, 'congealed' or 'crystallized' violence - in resisting which counter-violence becomes 'justified'. This theme was increasingly built into New Left student thinking and tactics. The aim in many countries has been to provoke those in authority to themselves employ physical force (e.g. by evicting students from buildings which they have seized) or to call in the police for this purpose. When 'official' violence of this kind is deployed, the radical view of authority as disguised violence appears 'confirmed'. There is the further consequence noted in the serious disturbances in Paris and at Columbia in the

spring of 1968, and subsequently at Harvard and at the LSE, of 'radicalizing' or 'polarizing' university opinion. The success of the tactic, however, clearly depends upon circumstances. There was one episode at LSE when violent action (the invasion of a Dean's room) was seen to be counter-productive. It was attributed to extreme groups by the School's militant Socialist Society, several of whose members volunteered to remove chalked slogans.

Another writer who has proved popular with university radicals is Frantz Fanon, the doctor and psychiatrist from Martinique who, in several books, reflected on his experiences with the Algerian anti-French rebels. "Les Damnes de la terre", published in the year of his death, does contain passages which moderate the author's support for violence - but its overall tone, especially that of the long opening chapter, expresses a consistent preference for violent methods of liberation.

> "Non-violence is an attempt to settle a colonial problem around a green baize table, before any regrettable act has been performed or irreparable gesture made, before any blood has been shed." (The Wretched of the Earth, Penguin books, p.48).

> "At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect." (ibid. p.74).

Fanon's book has a glowing preface from Jean Paul Sartre - who observes that "violence, like Achilles' lance, can heal the wounds that it has inflicted". Sartre warns Europeans that Fanon "shows clearly that this irrepressible violence is neither sound and fury, nor the resurrection of savage instincts nor even the effect of resentment: it is man recreating himself".

The role of violence is also discussed (though in less sanguine terms) by another group which also enjoys a link with Jean Paul Sartre* - the 'anti-psychiatry' circle in London led by Dr. Ronald Laing and Dr. David Cooper. This group helped to sponsor the 1967 London Congress on The Dialectics of Liberation - the speakers in which included Marcuse and Stokely Carmichael. Laing's "existentialist anti psychiatry" is, of course, initially directed at problems of 'mental illness'. Laing believes that such 'illness' is often the result of social labelling and that the established modes of treatment represent a form of "institutionalized organized violence" with

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*Laing and Cooper's work on Sartre is called Reason and Violence (1964) and has an approving foreword by Sartre himself.

its origins in the family. Arguing from an extreme case of a woman who held her son from a sixth storey window and said "See how I love you", Dr. Laing observes that "the normal way parents get their children to love them is to terrorize them....." (The Dialectics of Liberation, ed. D. Cooper, p.27). This view is developed into a wider critique of a social system that "operates through a network of counter-obedience reciprocities" - obedience from which we must 'liberate' ourselves. Dr. Cooper sees the structure of power and obedience, in east and west, as "men who are terrorized by the vision of human autonomy and spontaneity". (ibid. p.198). Cooper urges that "each institution ..... school, university, mental hospital" should become a "revolutionary centre for a transforming consciousness".

> "What we have to do quite simply is to deploy all our personal resources in attacking the institutionalization of experience and action in this society." (op.cit. p.197).

The scientific work of Laing and Cooper is very technical and controversial - but their political views, interestingly, combine an interpretation of society-as-violence and a profound anti-institutional bias. Hence their influence on the radical Left. But they do not instil violence as an end-in-itself.

The student protest/violence syndrome has obviously been influenced by such 'doctrinal' movements - all of which examine the 'functionality' of violence from perspectives other than of 'official' liberalism. I would argue that they provide a climate of opinion (no less important because of their ambiguities and arrière-pensées) within which discontent can move via disobedience and protest to the commission (not only by the discontented) of acts of violence. It would not be possible within the framework of this paper to examine the natural history of the myriad episodes that fall within the syndrome - though I believe that such a study, even over a narrow range (say within one chosen year) may yield more insights than some acute observers*have implied. For doctrinal or ideological perspectives (however confused and ambivalent) help first to identify (or create) the precipitating issues and events in these modes of collective behaviour, and then transform them into 'sacred topics' i.e. associating a selected (even a trivial or misperceived) source of local anxiety with

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*See Shils, The Intellectuals and the Powers (Chicago 1972) p.289.

a general principle (social justice, racial equality, individual privacy) that has historical resonance both nationally and internationally. However this search for the 'sacred' is not, one feels created by doctrine. Assisted along though it is by the millennialist or perfectionist bias of many political (and religious) beliefs, the need to transcend one's own personal anxieties, identity problems and status problems may precede any direct exposure to doctrinal influences. Such a 'need' may be (and I believe that this is so) quite fundamental to the human condition - though not easily dissected by mechanistic psychological techniques of enquiry..... Modern, rationalised, secularised, bureaucratised, 'materialist' society (the targets of so much, supposedly 'value-free' sociological analysis.....) does not invest such needs for transcendence with a public or symbolic role. And it is hardly surprising that those who most powerfully feel such a 'need' (whatever its psychological and historical-cultural sources) should at times express it collectively and publicly - rather than in the socially approved but 'privatised' forms. That this can lead to confrontation with 'authority' is also to be expected. Yet an outcome

of violent confrontation seems to be contingent rather than necessary - though, of course, where participants believe it to be necessitated by some supposed logic of history or of events this becomes an important social fact. The sources of contingency can be summarily stated.

The risk of a violent outcome is greater -

i) when the 'rebels' act (from doctrinal or other causes) on the assumption that their specific aims admit of no compromise because all compromise is corrupting.

ii) When they act on less consistently chiliastic assumptions but feel that tactics of moderation will be unpersuasive or too slow - thus immoderate or violent acts may help on a 'solution' to one 'issue' - even while another 'issue' is being contemplated or prepared.

iii) When the authorities - and more broadly the agents of social control initiate violence or respond 'disproportionately' to violence. Only the facts of the situation, in so far as they can be 'known' can give content to what is meant by 'disproportional' - and only the same 'knowledge' can assist other judgements, e.g. as to whether violent action by the agencies

of social control are initiated rationally or in panic. What it would be useful to explore are those differences in cultural milieux, national histories or organizational (i.e. police) structures which clearly lead 'social control' sometimes into measured, sometimes into more immoderate directions.

Such considerations, despite their generality, seem compatible with many of the overviews, case-studies and analyses prompted by the last decade's 'student unrest'. (They are [redacted] distinct from but cannot 'refute' other still larger theses, e.g. concerning universal 'deauthoritization'* or the incidence of relative deprivation). In what follows I draw selectively on this vast literature - with a view to illustrating, inter alia, the complex interplay between intra-University and national issues and the overlap (still insufficiently researched) between the 'cultural' and 'personality' elements in these matters. One of the more comprehensive overviews is

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*For this useful, if verbally infelicitous idea, see the provocative and learned book by L. Feuer, The Conflict of Generations (Heinemann 1960)

found in the work* of the late Professor E.W. Bakke and his wife based on studies in the field of the student movements in America, Japan, India, Mexico and Columbia. The value of their book on Campus Challenge is in its comparative focus on aspects of student life which seem to cut across national boundaries and are found in university systems with quite different histories and academic and scientific cultures of very diverse kinds. Students face a task of coming of age "physically, psychologically and socially": this involves inter alia testing their abilities and relationships with society. Furthermore there is a dimension quite specific to the situation of the student, namely, the task of "internalising" the model of what their culture expects of them as students within a network of responsibilities (both to their teachers and to various "significant others") and of creating a personally revised and satisfying version of that model. Finally they seek to become citizens - and this involves them in passionate expression and rational discourse upon the perceived obstacles to citizenship. The Bakkes would agree that such self-conscious and ennobling, often confused sensitivity is

*See E.W. Bakke and M.S. Bakke, Campus Challenge, Archer Books, 1971).

not uniformly found among all students. Yet it was found in the many cultures which they studied - and making allowances for differences in class and occupational structure, it is seen in countries other than those they studied, including Great Britain.

Following on from this the Bakkes' book surveys a set of perceptions which <u>can</u> create among students a self-assertive, system-rejecting, authority-distrusting, view of their environment - a rhetoric which explains the "societal blockages" to their development and which justifies to them their unorthodox, uncompromising and violent reaction. The book leaves to the psychologist the very difficult question of why and how some students, always a minority, actually acquire these predispositions. We are dealing here not with psychology but with ideology and with the skill, which waxes and wanes, of ideologists in finding confirming evidence for their rhetoric and in developing, by incantations, and "authentic" commitment to action, a large, mobile and transient following - especially within the large multi-universities of our time. The mixed political and educational content of the ideology becomes plausible prima facie when, as is so often the case, there is confusion over national and educational purposes - a confusion which the student

activists, of course, reflect rather than create but which their activism (and the reactionary response thereto) further intensifies.

Other writers, among whom Edward Shils has been conspicuous, have sought to isolate the cultural novelty behind the forms taken by student dissidence. They would agree that youth culture is in one sense nothing new - nor is a romantic and idealistic antinomianism. It can take, and has taken in many places, a quietist and nonpolitical form - but it can lead in political[1] directions and to psychologically satisfying forms of expressive violence and anti-social delinquency.[2] In a broadly accurate and suggestive essay Shils[3] has sought to unite an analysis of that culture with observations on the political dissociation of the young from the older, institutionalised forms of adult political activity. No doubt such an

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[1] This can of course take "right wing" as well as "left wing" forms.

[2] Few would accept the contention of Margaret Rooke, in her overview of British campus unrest that the basic cause can be located "in the problem that there is in males a period between physical maturation and the gaining and the acceptance of the real responsibilities of manhood". Relevant, yes: basic, no. And what of the female role in campus troubles? See M. Rooke, Anarchy and Apathy (Hamish Hamilton, 1971).

[3] E. Shils, The Intellectuals and the Powers, Chicago, 1972, especially pp.265-297.

analysis needs to be worked out more fully on a country by country basis - for all those societies which have managed to develop an operative conception af citizenship and which have institutionalised, in all its varieties and imperfections, 'ballot box' democracy.

Shils makes a point of contrasting the past and present university turmoils. Until the recent past he writes: "the politically radical and revolutionary students..... not only accepted the authoritative structures of their radical and revolutionary elders but they also accepted the university as an institution in the society against which they rebelled". *

Such a situation can certainly be a seedbed for uninhibited and violent political behaviour. But it remains a question as to how far even the most spectacular cases - such, for example, that of France in 1968 - can be fully understood if our attention remains fixed upon that seedbed. Nor is it necessarily the case that such potentially violent cultural propensities can <u>on their own</u> lead to the most significant political results. They are part of the scenario - not the entirety of the script. We all recall the violent

*ibid. p.273. Such acceptance is bound to be eroded when students become more numerous and are faced by the problems of 'social marginality' discussed, for example, by Raymond Boudon - see below.

anti-system imagery at the Sorbonne in May 1968 - the famous posters which proclaimed:

> "The revolution which is beginning will call in question not only capitalist society but industrial society. The consumer society must die of a violent death. We are inventing a new and unified world. Imagination has seized power."

Yet quite a different - but inherently plausible perspective comes from the interpretation of the May events offered by Raymond Boudon.* He interprets student behaviour in terms of a clash between the 'liberal elitist orientation of the University and the rapid changes in the characteristics of the student body". The thrust of his argument is that issues relating to career expectations and fears about blocked social mobility were basic to the country-wide and diffuse support for the rebellion in French Universities and not the critique of the consumer society or the Marcusian metaphysic which the Parisian leaders certainly promulgated from the chic purlieus of the 16th arrondissement. Boudon's

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*R. Boudon, 'Sources of Student Protest in France' in The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol.395 (1971), p.139 et seq.

thesis is that the tinder for the revolt was the sense of 'social marginality' felt by a significant proportion of a rapidly expanded student population conjoined with the broader issues set out by a radical elite and within a specific national political situation. It follows from this that counter-violence and administrative reorganisation (including student participation and overdue revisions of an archaic examination system) may have cooled the situation in France but could not remove the underlying factors.

Boudon does not discuss in any detail the more immediate political consequences for France. The student uproar had a demonstration effect - making other Frenchmen aware, in the words of one historian, that they, no less than the students "had a great many grievances and that their expectations had not been fulfilled".* The student revolt, with some interesting time lags, intensified these currents of relative deprivation: and as a recent comment has put it:**

> "It was the workers who downed tools and occupied their factories after 14th May, in sympathy with the students, who made the Paris uprising different in kind from other campus revolts by dragging the hesitant trade union leaders towards the proclamation of the general strike."

But thereafter the students and the workers came to a

*W. Laqueur, Europe Since Hitler, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1970, p.351.

**R. Moss, Urban Guerrillas, Temple Smith, 1972, p.19.

fairly rapid parting of the ways. For there was little common cause - and certainly no cemented revolutionary alliance - between the loosely organised students, with their images of an 'imaginative' anti-consumerist society or their concern with quite complex intra-university issues, on the one hand, and, on the other, the organised working class, led by the Communists, who sought (and indeed obtained) a greater share in consumer affluence.

The American student rebellions are too numerous and diverse to encapsulate within any simple formulae. Indeed it is significant that a leading political sociologist prefaces his extensive analysis of data on the background and opinion of both faculty and students with the following rather omnibus interpretation:

> "The larger explanation for the rise of activism during the past half decade or so must lie primarily in political events: the emergence of the civil rights and Vietnam issues in a particular post-Stalinist political epoch. These gave to the more radically disposed students the issues: their social situation gave them the stimulus: and the campus situation furnished them with the means to build a movement."*

*S. M. Lipset, Rebellion in the University, Routledge, 1972 p.37.

Professor Lipset's survey both of history and sentiment within American universities is extremely acute: but though he does not neglect it entirely he does not stress a dimension which, as I have indicated, is really central to the understanding of campus violence - that is, the response to dissent which is evoked from the agencies of social control* Other surveys of campus unrest - as well as case studies of specific incidents - are extremely informative on this dimension. Thus the Scranton Report (the report in 1970 of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest seeks to complement the familiar picture of institutions under siege and threatened by "small and dedicated groups - not always members of the university itself - that are committed to the use of violence and disruption" with a lengthy review of the police and other social control machinery which the Report believed could, if operated with discretion, turn the tide. The Scranton Report, like the documents which emerged from the Kerner Commission on Civil Disorders and the Milton Eisenhower Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, is a mine of information and guidance - as well as a source

*The more general significance of this for the study of political violence is pointedly raised in part I of C.J. Friedrich, The Pathology of Politics, Harper & Row, 1972

of controversy - over the interplay between protesters and agencies of social control. Behind all the detail* a simple, if distressing picture emerges - neither by training, social background, outlook or methods of operation were the United States police (still less the National Guard) prepared to face the novel exigencies of the period - either in the ghetto or the campus situations. Given so many local and autonomous jurisdictions and the cost and expertise that were required, it proved impossible to implement uniformly the experience-based reports that emerged from Presidential Commissions.

Some of the issues which face "the public power" are highlit by the "Berkeley invention" described by Professor Searle in 'The Campus War' - based as it was upon experience from the many standpoints he has occupied on the Berkeley battle-lines. Unlike many of the commentators he places the motif of violence at the core of radical strategy and practice. Though the Scranton Report is [redacted] correct to note that violence escalated on American campuses following the widespread black disturbances in

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*Perhaps best exemplified by the Kerner Commission's comparative study of the successes and failures of different patterns of riot control in the Newark riots of 1967.

1967 and 1968 in several American cities, there is no doubt that for various local reasons* the Berkeley students succeeded in 1964 in precipitating a police intervention which, in the words of the Scranton Report was interpreted "as a confirmation of the radicals' original claim that the university was unjust and repressive, especially toward those working for civil rights". Searle goes on to argue correctly that when at Berkeley, and elsewhere, the universities failed to confirm "the radicals' original claim" the radicals themselves resorted to violence on the principle that "in general without police response your movement is dead, and often the only way to elicit a police response is violence". Searle also makes the important distinction between crowd violence and guerilla violence. Crowd violence has, of course, been much more common and it can take a rather competitive ritualistic form (as clearly happened at Berkeley after 1967), such violence played out before the television camera is "functional" in that it succeeds in discrediting the

*Long before the campus explosions of 1964 at Berkeley, the students had been the victims of police violence during the San Francisco hearings of the House of Representatives UnAmerican Activities Committee. Understandably, the students retained vivid memories of that incident.

university authorities and can lead to social and political backlashes - which futher confirm radical perceptions of a corrupt, unenlightened, repressive society. The aim here is not so much the causing of damage as what I would call a cumulative 'demonstration effect': it deepens a relationship of enmity and thus by a 'creep' process comes, in Searle's understatement, "to cost the authorities a great deal of support". It is obvious that this is a Sorelian ploy, and one which, in the United States and elsewhere, 'found' (and moulded to its purposes) a uniquely favourable and 'pre-disposed' cultural situation. On the other hand, guerilla violence of the kind attempted in the USA by the 'Weathermen' - or subsequently by other groups elsewhere, e.g. in Germany or Turkey, involving bombing, kidnapping and 'executions', has a more direct, in some way limited, quasi-military function. It is true that the 'guerilla' motif can be (and has been) blended with the Sorelian ploy. Searle, himself, notes that in the prolonged difficulties at San Francisco

largely, and over-enthusiastically, placed the student activities within category c) rather than category b) to which, on a more rational assessment, they would have been assigned.

A brief expansion of this point will illustrate its significance. The Kent State tragedy began on 1st May 1970,* the day after the Presidential announcement of action in Cambodia. On that evening, youths from the University broke shop windows in the town and threw rocks at the police. Town officials called for the National Guard, clearly announcing that they were not faced with protests over the new development in the Indo-China War - but with something bigger and revolutionary - a 'Weatherman' episode of a deeply subversive and dangerous character.** By the time the National Guard arrived on 2nd May, some students had

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*See on this the article by Elliott Judwick and August Meier, 'The Kent State Affair: Social Control of a Putative Value-Oriented Movement', Sociological Inquiry, Vol.12 (2): p.81-86.

**The extent of the unreality may be gauged from the statement made on the day before the killings: "I think we are up against the strongest well-trained militant group that has ever assembled in America."

State * " on an issue ostensibly about black militant demands, the crowd scenes were overwhelmingly white, and most of the arson and bombing, as well as the beating up of the newspaper staff, appears to have been done by blacks".

Searle's account - no less than the detailed records of incidents - establishes a distinction between a) a semi-ritualised 'psyhhodrama' of violence, with very complex anddiffused origins bearing upon general defects, real or supposed, in the university or the wider society : often this becomes shaped into a 'game' of antagonistic cooperation designed to limit disruption . b) acts of specific , less ritualised protest - often involving acts of collective violence and c) acts of guerrilla warfare and subversion. This is more than an an analytic distinction : and failure to observe it led in at least one well-documented case, that of Kent State University in May I970 , to a major tragedy. The 'public power' in that situation

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* John Searle, The Campus War, Penguin Books I972 p.82 See also the descriptions and commentary in L.Litwak and H. Wilner, College Days in Earthquake Country, Random House, I97I passim.

burned down the campus ROTC building and were forcibly cutting the hoses of the firemen. The National Guard then forced back a stone-throwing crowd of students. On 3rd May the ugly atmosphere was intensified when the National Guard twice tear-gassed a peaceful crowd and were similarly involved later in the day with a less peaceful group of stone-throwers. The point of this brief description is to indicate that the killings on 4th May took place in an atmosphere in which fantasy on the part of townspeople, no less than of students, provided the dominating definitions of the situation. The evidence is very strong that the official definition was such as to distort a very complicated reality. How deep this could go was shown by the subsequent quasi-legal cover-up by the investigating grand jury which placed a rather heavy weight on "the laxity, over-indulgence and permissiveness" which they deemed to have prevailed in the University prior to the May events. There can be little doubt that such a critique (especially, though not only, within a small community) enters very dangerously into the weapons of self-justification and social control. That the cycle of events ended so

tragically could not have been predicted. But the Kent State affair underlines a point of very general importance, viz. tragic outcomes via escalation and mutual incomprehension, fantasy or panic, are more likely when the ethos of a society (or a 'relevant segment' of a society) makes no clear distinction between protest and subversion - and fails to understand the difference between selective, illegal, wildness or provocation and revolutionary threat.*

So far as the United States of America was concerned, Kent State appears in retrospect, to have marked the end of an era. It is small consolation that among its consequences (via a shock effect) was a lower potential to violence and (in some quarters at least) a deeper consideration of very delicate dilemmas of social control.** But other

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*The relevance of this extends well beyond the social control of student violence. There are grounds for believing that similar misjudgments precipitated the turning point in Northern Ireland history when [redacted] the autumn 1968 Londonderry march of the Civil Rights Association was broken up by the police: this was later described by the Cameron Commission, set up by the British Government, as wholly unjustified."

**Thus the Scranton Report made some very cogent remarks on the techniques, e.g. for crowd dispersal by means which exclude shooting, for the making of minimal arrests with the minimum of force, for a tightness of command which can reduce the risk of individual excesses and enterprise on the part of the police, for avoiding unnecessary modes of clandestine intelligence work.

countries are still faced with the core problem, that of distinguishing between potentially violent dissent and intended violent subversion, and of devising a discriminating and measured response. Each failure to discriminate in this way is, for the country concerned , a step towards the loss of authority discussed by Hannah Arendt in her essay on 'Violence' - an outcome which is the one unambiguous intention of those who , as Edward Shils has put it, are bent upon "antinomian destruction". * This, surely, if one may be permitted a final value-judgment , would be a consummation devoutly to be deplored.....

* Shils op. cit.